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The University Club
One West 54th Street
New York, New York 10019

January 4, 1968

Mr. Gary Murr
Rural Route 1
Moffat, Ontario, Canada

Dear Mr. Murr:

I am writing to you at the suggestion of Harold Weisberg concerning your research on Norman Similas. I feel you should follow it to the bitter end just on the bare chance he may be the man standing behind Altgens and to his right in the Zapruder film. If you can get a look at Similas you should be able to tell if that is indeed him.

If it isn't, Similas was not on the south side of Elm that day, or anywhere else near enough to have taken the photos he claims. I can guarantee you that; from the research work I have done on photographers. I'm enclosing a monograph and exhibits for your use. May I also suggest that you take advantage of Harold's offer of Ray Marcus' map. It is better than mine for spotting witnesses.

I talked to and corresponded with Similas last summer with the same sort of results you have had and finally gave up. However, I have always wanted to find an opportunity to come to Toronto and visit him at his home. I have learned one thing about photographs and photographers of the assassination; Never leave any stone unturned.

I found him by phoning information for Willowdale and obtaining his mother's phone number. She is the only Similas listed. When I called him at that number, she gave the operator his unlisted number. Later, he told me he would instruct his mother not to do that again.

I explained to him who I was and about my research and he said if I would write to him he would consider letting me see his pictures. I wrote and when I didn't hear from him I called again. This time he said he would send me a full set of his photos (13). When I quizzed him about where he was standing and what the pictures showed, I got the same kinds of hazy answers you did. But, I've found many photographers who don't remember where they were or what photos they took.

After two weeks I phoned again and he told me his secretary had mailed the photos. I said we'd better put a tracer on them because they had not arrived. He said he would check with his secretary and find out where they had been mailed to, my office or my club in New York where I live.

After another two weeks, I called again, this time at his hardware store which he told me he owned. He said he would send me another set of photos. (13) This time I asked him again what they showed and he said three of them showed Kennedy on Elm Street with the Depository Building in the background. He said at least one of the photos showed the sixth floor window with no one in it between the first and the last shot. I told him what that photo would be worth to Life magazine. (I have been in close touch with Life) He said he realized it but wasn't sure he wanted to deal with them.

Anyway, the photos never did arrive. After a little more time, I asked my secretary to phone his secretary and find out when and where she had mailed them. She couldn't reach anyone at first. When she finally got through to the hardware store, another man answered. When she asked for Similas' secretary the man said, "Are you kidding, he doesn't have a secretary." When she tried his unlisted number his wife answered and said he was out of town and couldn't be reached.

My secretary kept trying both numbers for several days with the same results, till one day the hardware store number was disconnected. That's when I gave up.

I called Ray Jeffries at Associated Press in Chicago. He says Similas had several rolls of film and that all photos on all rolls were of the convention Similas attended, except for two photos on one roll. One of these showed the front of a car and the other showed the rear end of a car. Neither photo showed the occupants of the car or anything in the background which would give Jeffries a clue as to where and when they were taken.

However, Jeffries was looking at negatives, developed on the spot in Chicago, and would not necessarily have had any way of knowing whether those two photos or any of the others were taken in Dealey Plaza.

At least we do know Similas had some photos, and we know a car shows in two of them.

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I have often thought that Similas had a vivid imagination and a desire for recognition and that he studied many of the stories about what happened to such an extent that he almost believes he was really there taking pictures when he really wasn't. Either that is the case, or else he actually was there.

One thing you might try is asking his mother whether she has ever seen the photos or discussed the situation with her son. She might give you some hints about his imagination. The best bet however is to meet him in person. Let me know if I can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,

Dick/mw

Richard E. Sprague

RES/mw
enclosure

cc: Mr. Harold Weisberg